11/6/71

Dear Gary (HR, JP),

For the first time since the night of Ned's call, which was two before his last trip here, I got what most people would consider a night's lseep last night. (The night he called I couldn't sleep and was back at work at 1:30 a.m. The nighht he was here I got two hours sleep.) It is incredible to me that I could sleep at all because of the hxxxx shape Lil is in and the two things she elected to talk about, meaning she brought them up, aside from the way shex feels, while we were having some tea before I went to bed. One is her independent decision, for I hadn't discussed it with her, that having done what the deal with Ned required of me, I have no choice but to abandon everything else, some of which involves a six-figure damage suit, and complete it. I agree, and feeling so much better when I got up a bit after five, begnn it. At the point where I stopped after Ned's call, for that was all I needed to know the essentials. The other was finances. She wants to get a job, which is unlreastic because her regular tax employment begins in two months and because she isn't up to long-time work. The tax season alone is too much for her. I, of course, am as close as anyone can be to totally unemploayable with the work I've been doing. I use the word context often, and I think too much is out of it. Our finances, as of this minute, ar these: When I get a carton of cigarettes, which I don't dare not do this pm when - have to go into town, and if Lil has no shopping to do, I will have $6.00. On this I must go to DC Monday, meet with Bud and Jim on the Ray case and my statement to the Sen. Jud. Com. on Powell (no other critic thought of it, and all had more time), park the car and spend the rest of the day walking, which will cost only $3.00, and get home. This is the context of our lives. It is what influences how we think, act and react.

And I ached, because yesterday was a nice one. Aside from a brisk morning walk I spent an hour and a half in brisk outside exercise, including as a machetero, a career I'll resume today when the dew is gone. The body and the place both need it. So, if it is surprsing that I slept, I did , and it was rather refreshing. I started going over the last of HR's suggestions and corrections on the panel part of PH. Two things came to mind that illuminate what - have written, in once case perhaps didn't explain enough, and in fairness to you I feel - should interrupt the work to go into it.

Ned asked Howard for a copy of Howard's book so he could evaluate what I say about the medical stuff with what Howard did. Now, first of all, when Ned was supposedly working on a competitive book, there is an ethical question which I pass over. But Ned never asked me if Howard had made this evaluation in person. I then told him he had. In fact, had come here to do it and after he left I sent him a copy of each and every change. It is extensive work for both of us, as he will tell you. Self-portrait of Ned: His unique combination of superintellect, superreasoningpower, superinstant knowledge, permits him to read that part of this that Howard put on paper and make more out of it alone than Howard can with that plus what is in his mind plus what he has seen in my files plus what we have discussed plus our discussions of differences as well as fact and agreements and if I took time I'd probably find a few other plusses. Except for Lifton, I saw to it that everyone considered a responsible critic by anyone got copies of the two older parts of the book. Some, like PH, made good suggestions already incorporated in it. SM didn't take time, nor did Cyril. Or, neither discovered the error there was. Not Mary or any of them. I know that Dick did. So, what was Ned really up to, not what did he say he intended?

Howard, let me say, is quite capable of pursuing a point with vigor. Early this morning, for I am discussing each of his corrections and suggestions with him, the undeviating practise, your superminx to the contrary notwithstanding, I pointed out to him that the lecture he delivered confused the point he was making in my mind. He is vigorous, not timid. And there are legitimate differences, which happens to be the last thing I went into with him before I went for a wlak, when it occured to me I owe you these couple of explanations. I took this sentence in the panel report literally:"A well defined zone of discoloration of the

edge of the back wound, most pronounced on its upper and outer mar ins, identifies it as having the characteristics of the entrance wound of a buller." I regard this as at best inadequate, at worst deception and error. Howard says that because the panel also says that there was abrasion -and they do not say abrasion is a characteristic of an entrance wound but Ho ward knows it is (true), I am unfair to the panel. I disagree, as I have told him, also forecfully and with my own lecture. But my point here is that on a question like this, while I have considered Howard's opinion, I disagree with it. Whether or not both positions are tenable, and I happen to believe that mine, not Howard s, is the correct position, I'm not about to have Ned or Howard or anyone else impose their judgement over mine on my work, and I think it is outrageous than anyone would be presumptious enough to do it. Question me, of course; argue another side, certainly, Demand proof? Reasonable. But dictate, and presume to? But what man in what kind of intellectual occupation, most of all research and writing, would agree to this condition and preserve or deserve any self-respect? And what of the man who would demand it? Especially when that man has to have least factual knowledge of anyone who can even claim to have done any work in the field and has done no more than read and talk. Or, has nothing but second-hand knowledge at best?

I have in every case, with everything I have done, tested my work to the degree possible, beginning by challenging all the Commission, some of the lawyers, Hoover, Rowley et al, the autopsy doctors and God knows who else to confront it and disprove it. In every case, as I came to know critics, I did the same, beginning weth WWII. Even Jerry, who claims to no detailed knowledge of the case, will tell you that I have solicited his critical com ent on the comprehensibility and lucidity of the writing, and have chided him because on the one hand he is critical of these things and on the other dosan't read until, it at all, after the retyping is done. So, even the inference is a libel. Of all those possible, the one least qualified for the role he demands is Ned. And it is a role no honest person can permit with his own work.

So you can understand the enormous amount of wasted time that this makes almost inevitable, I cite you a specific example. At the time I wrote the panel part, certain things were more than reasonable, seemed to be the case, part of the obfuscation. But in the course of my own pursuit of further knowledge, something others did without eliciting it, I learned from Fisher that the seeming truth isn't, reasonable as it seems. I made two references to it. I spotted and corrected the second one, but not the first. Now, if I can't correct the first in the same space, it means remaking every page in that paragraph beginning with it. In some cases, this has taken as much as one of my very long days.

And this other things, like indexing. And Lil is or has completed the re-incdexing of the first part if not the second (we don t check on each other) and the kinds of thing we can learn between now and whenever-if ever-I can print the book, and you can get a very faint glimmer of the cost in time to prepare a book for printing when corrections have to be made. And this is a large book. With one of Ned's restrictions, cost, I had to eliminate every reference to (see pp.___) necause I could not know whether that particular document could be included within the cost limitation. This is already done with the first part and is ready for incorporation in the second, I having found and noted (I sure as hell hope) all cases and "il having typed the necessary corrections in the pnael part.

Are you beginning to get an idea of how I feel, what the real costs to us are, in time, in unnecessary aggravation and emotional tear and wear, in worry of other kind, in even the slight costs in cash which, I again remind you, to us are never slight? Or why we both feel as, regardless of how strongly I may have stated it, I cannot possibly have communicated to you? The realities are the conditions or our lives, not t one of any others. So let me close with an example of a very slight, really insignificant thing in terms of its meaning and cost to me: as you know, for you and my doctors confirmed it, I can use wine as a substtotute for the prescribed tranquilizers, and I do and prefer to. Of course, when he was here, Ned was upset. I hap en to t ink for reasons other than he has told anyone or admitted to himself. In any event, he hit the wine he was drinking)"Lil)s" to us because she prefers that to what my doctor told me is the better tranquilizer, port I don't begrudge him the wine. He needed it Be he actually used up almost half a gallon and in two or three days we'll have none and I'll be back on the pills. Hope you understand t is as I inetend it. Best,